



ON  
TRAC  
OFF  
ROA

Monster  
YAMAHA  
SEMPER PARIN  
BRIDGESTONE  
spainstars





# A 100% MOMENT

*First Grand Prix victory for  
Team Standing Construct Yamaha Valentin Guillod.*





@ride100percent  
[www.ride100percent.com](http://www.ride100percent.com)  
Photo: Ray Archer







# O MX

## A different view...

Startling image from Ray Archer of Kemea Yamaha rider Damon Graulus seeing the world from a different perspective in the MX2 class during the French Grand Prix. The young Belgian's collision with Valentin Guillod at the start of the second moto led to a massive smash tackling the step-up and both Yamaha riders were fortunate to escape relatively unscathed

Photo by Ray Archer







**MotoGP**

## **Hold that line...**

The finger is being pointed squarely at Honda and the RCV for Marc Marquez's inability to attack MotoGP in the same manner as the two previous seasons. Other HRC riders are also allegedly grumbling about the 2015 configuration. Excellent Blogs in this issue by Gavin and David Emmett lift the lid on the current dark times in 'Red'

Photo by Martin Heath











## OFF-ROAD

### Riding the 'Berg...

Mountains of stone and jagged rock? It can only mean the Erzberg Rodeo and the 21st edition of the hardest extreme enduro presented some devilish challenges for the Red Bull KTM collective. MSR-runner Jonny Walker went in as defending champ and came out sharing spoils as part of a victorious quartet

Photo by Red Bull Content Pool









# FLEX

## STRETCH YOUR

DEVELOPED BY FOX DIRECTLY WITH

## 4-WAY S

## THE NEXT LEVEL

HIGH PERFORM



FOXHEADEUROPE





# KALIBR

## THIRTY LIMITS

RYAN DUNGEY

## REACH

## UP IN

## PERFORMANCE RACEWEAR





D

AMA-MX

TENNESSEE NATIONAL

MUDDY CREEK • JUNE 6th • Rnd 4 of 12

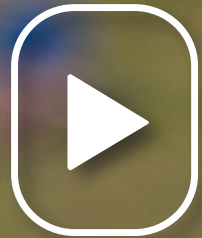
450 winner: Ryan Dungey, KTM

250 winner: Jeremy Martin, Yamaha





AMA MX MUDDY CREEK



PLAY

NO MORE TOMAC THROWS THE LUCAS OIL AMA PRO NATIONAL SERIES OPEN FOR RYAN DUNGEY AND THE SUPERCROSS CHAMPION DULY OWNED MUDDY CREEK. THE 250 CONTEST IS A LITTLE CLOSER BETWEEN JEREMY MARTIN AND MARVIN MUSQUIN BUT IN THE PRINCIPAL CLASS A LOT WILL DEPEND ON WHAT KEN ROCZEN CAN CONJURE TO PROTECT THAT NO.1

By Steve Matthes  
Photos by Simon Cudby

# DUNGEY BACK ON THE BOIL



**T**he Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championships are four rounds down with the most recent race taking place in Tennessee at Muddy Creek Raceway. The Muddy Creek national is in its third year on the circuit and this edition saw perhaps the best version of the track. A bit of rain in the area before the race helped things out and the normally pretty hard and slick, sometimes dusty, terrain had pretty good traction, deep ruts and made for a challenging course. What we didn't see, up front anyways, was really any great racing. The series is shaping up in terms of who the championship contenders are but we've yet to see any real battle for the lead occur....

Sixteen motos left, lots can happen still, so let's recap the race that was and other juicy subplots from the pits.

With the departure of GEICO Honda's Eli Tomac due to a shoulder injury (Tomac had racked up five straight moto wins) the 450MX series is Red Bull KTM's Ryan Dungey's to lose. The defending champion RCH Suzuki's Kenny Roczen started slow due to a back injury and although he appears to be back to his old level, the deficit he created from his poor first round combined with a lack of anyone being able to challenge Dungey or Roczen leaves Dungey in control. There isn't a rider in the series that I'd want to have to depend on to make a mistake least than Ryan Dungey. The guy is a machine: he's fit, fast and consistent. He's the Terminator of motocross and he just puts out the same level of excellence no matter what the conditions are. Roczen's going to have to lay it all out there to grab wins and hope something happens as he's well over a moto down in the points.

The problem for Roczen prior to the weekend was that he couldn't match, never mind beat, Dungey.

Promisingly, the old Roczen was back in the second moto when he got the start and checked out on the field. Dungey started around sixth or so, got into second and was going back and forth with Roczen in terms of the gap before a tip-over. That was it; Roczen took the win and gained three valuable points. The problem for Roczen was in the first moto he couldn't beat Dungey when he didn't get the start. And, oh yeah, he also couldn't beat Rockstar Husqvarna's Jason Anderson in the first moto so that left Dungey adding two more points to his lead via his 1-2 moto scores.

-During the ET era earlier this series, when Tomac was racking off the moto wins, Dungey had made a mention or two about his set-up being 'off'. When asked about the state of Dungey's motorcycle, his manager Roger DeCoster shrugged it off but behind the scenes Dungey was working hard to try and be happy with his KTM 450SXF Factory Edition machine that is in its first season of outdoors.

Well, according to his team, both Marvin Musquin and Dungey have discovered something on their bikes that has proved to be beneficial. Both riders rode great in Tennessee and it's bad news for the competition that these two could get any better.

-In the 250MX class, the pecking order is clear. It's Yamalube Star Racing's Jeremy Martin, Musquin and then everyone else. In Tennessee it was Jeremy going 2-1 for the overall (this after going 1-1 last weekend in Colorado) while Musquin went 1-4 after a second turn crash left him dead last. So far through the eight motos, both riders have had two poor motos due to crashes and bike issues. They're very close in speed, and have each won four motos. It's too close to pick between them and we've yet to see a real battle between the two for a win.

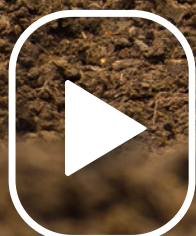


AMA MX MUDDY CREEK





Musquin on the gas. The Frenchman has dropped out of the top two only twice all season and one of those motos came at Muddy Creek. His fourth place in the second sprint was still a remarkable comeback from being twenty-first on the opening lap



PLAY





## AMA MX MUDDY CREEK

For his part the always-happy Musquin was, well, happy after his moto win and come from behind ride: "I'm really happy. I made it happen. I made good passes. I was feeling confident on making those passes so I was really happy. But then at one point, the closer I got to the top 5 for example, the faster the guys are" he said after the race while he waited to pee in a cup for his random USADA drug test. "So it was tough. It was humid so I spent a lot of energy also. After halfway I was starting to get a little bit tired and obviously the last three laps were tough. If I felt better I could have got 3rd but I got 4th. I gave it 100%."

-Monster Pro Circuit's Adam Cianciarulo has missed a lot of time the last couple of years. After jumping to the pro class a bit earlier than thought, we've seen AC suffer a shoulder injury and miss his rookie year of supercross, miss the first five motocross nationals once that healed due to sickness. Then we saw him struggle through the remaining nationals and the doubts about his instant stardom many predicted started getting bigger.

Those doubts got smaller when Cianciarulo came out and won three out of his first five 250SX races in 2014. Then another shoulder injury happened and Adam missed the remainder of the year. Under the knife once again, Adam headed over to Geneva to get a supercross race under his belt before the start of the 2015 supercross series. Well, that didn't work out as Adam crashed over there and suffered

yet another shoulder injury (unrelated to his old shoulder problem). Would the kid who is perhaps the most hyped amateur prospect to hit the scene since Mike Alessi ever fulfill what so many thought they would see?

Well, we're still not sure about that but Cianciarulo lined up for the start of the nationals for another comeback and four races in, it's going well. Cianciarulo qualified fastest and led laps at Hangtown, finished a third overall last week in Colorado and in Tennessee he rode well despite a crash in the first moto while second that put him back to fifth. Second moto he was third for a fourth overall on the day.

"I know I can do it [win a race]. I have the talent to do it," he said. "I show flashes I just need to get in that mindset and do it," said Cianciarulo after the race "But two consistent weekends, 5-4 and then 5-3. I didn't get podium overall this weekend but overall not a bad week. Go back to Florida, put in some work."

With no lingering effects from any of his shoulder issues, AC has been a little under the radar this summer which is fine for him. You can see the potential there and he's figuring it out... it's just taken a little longer than he would have liked.





Another moto podium appearance (his second of a debut term in 450MX) marked continued progress for Blake Baggett who has now also pushed up to fourth in the standings



## AMA MX MUDDY CREEK



Martin keeps the red plate after his third overall victory from four rounds on the YZ250F. Yamaha were also pleased to see Phil Nicoletti finding the top five overall in 450MX (below)









# CLASSIFICATION & AMA CHAMPIONSHIP

## 450MX OVERALL RESULT

### Riders

1	Ryan Dungey, USA	KTM
2	Ken Roczen, GER	Suzuki
3	Jason Anderson, USA	Husqvarna
4	Blake Baggett, USA	Suzuki
5	Phil Nicoletti, USA	Yamaha

## 250MX OVERALL RESULT

### Riders

1	Jeremy Martin, USA	Yamaha
2	Marvin Musquin, FRA	KTM
3	Jessy Nelson, USA	KTM
4	Adam Cianciarulo, USA	Kawasaki
5	Joey Savatgy, USA	Kawasaki

## 450MX STANDINGS AFTER 4 OF 12 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Ryan Dungey	175
2 Ken Roczen	138
3 Blake Baggett	135
4 Eli Tomac	125
5 Justin Barcia	114

## 250MX STANDINGS AFTER 4 OF 12 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Jeremy Martin	175
2 Marvin Musquin	169
3 Jessy Nelson	122
4 Adam Cianciarulo	112
5 Joey Savatgy	100





# WATCHING YOU...

By Steve Matthes

**F**ormer supercross and motocross champion Chad Reed made big news last week when he told me after the Lakewood national in Colorado that he might not be able to continue racing the Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championships if the promoters were not going to let him wear his helmet camera sponsor.

"This camera deal is worth more to me to stay at home than to go race the races. If they don't let me wear it then maybe this is it for me" a frustrated Reed said long after his poor day.

"I think it's GoPro coming in and saying, hey, this is what we want. And the promoter's doing what they normally do and f\*\*king over everybody. Like I said, this camera deal is worth a lot of money to me. If I can't wear it then maybe this is my last National for the year. We'll see what happens. It's a bit of an issue. I'm losing interest in the race team to be honest, for this reason."

MX Sports, the series managers and sometimes promoters, have an exclusive deal with GoPro, the company that really started the action sports camera business. Besides the banners and all the things that come along with being series sponsor, GoPro's deal also includes that no rider shall wear a competing companies product on top of their helmet.

Make no mistake about it, although his results in motocross haven't been up to his usual standards the last few years, Reed's threatened withdrawal from the series would be felt. He's without a doubt one of the series most popular riders.

As we know now, Reed did indeed show up at the next round of the series and posted on social media that he was there for the fans and his main sponsors but this is something that's driven a wedge between the outspoken Aussie and the folks that run MX Sports.

MX Sports side of things is that they are protecting the interests of one of their valuable partners and honoring the contract they have signed. Reportedly it's a five-year deal that ends at the end of 2016. GoPro insisting on no competing companies mounting their cameras on the riders' helmet was a brilliant move and at the time, there really weren't any other action camera companies around so if you were MX Sports, why not agree to these terms? GoPro has offered a camera to any other rider that wishes to use one and watch it after practice if they want to see some lines.

Before Reed, teams like Hart and Hartington and factory Honda along with riders like Wil Hahn and Ryan Dungey all had deals with other camera companies and tried to fight the same fight as Reed but have come up short. It should be noted that Feld Motorsports, the promoters of Monster Energy Supercross, have the same deal as the motocross series so this is an across the board issue for teams and riders.

There are a couple of issues that come up when riders want to run a helmet camera. As it is now, GoPro owns the footage that comes off the top of helmets and does not let said footage get out there. The promoters putting on the SX and MX races have the deal with GoPro,





their television partners and allowing teams or riders to just post up their own race on YouTube is understandably an issue for promoters. It's their series, they own whatever happens out on the track. That problem is solved by just not allowing other companies into the sport to film.

But Reed (along with the other teams with competing deals) offered to just run a dummy camera on his helmet so there are no footage rights issues. But this is still a no-no in terms of GoPro's deal with the promoters. Again, in a nice move by GoPro, they have that spot on top of the helmet reserved for their hardware.

It's a bit akin to series sponsor FMF insisting that every team in the pits use FMF exhausts on their machines but everyone reading this recognizes how silly that would be since there are so many other exhaust manufactures. There was a bit of shortsightedness on the promoters end of not thinking about other companies could indeed enter the world of sport cameras. The teams are free to run logos of other camera companies on their bikes or team trucks, they just can't have the camera on top of the helmet.

"It's just like I'm bashing my head against the wall. It's why there are not many teams out here other than the manufacturers. They're (the OEM's) just always going to go racing and they're just going to do what they do. But yeah, for me I rely 100% on income from sponsors. Pro Circuit is always going to be here because they got a product and that's their advertisement. If they don't see that then I'm out. It's

just not worth it for me. My head's not in racing right now. I'm trying to sort out what I want to do for next year. It's kind of a stressful time."

Chad Reed crashed in the first turn in the first moto in Tennessee and fought hard to a 20th. In the second moto he pulled out around mid-way.







2.0 (JUNIOR)



3.0 (ADULT)

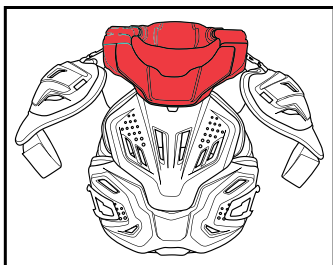


INSPIRING CONFIDENCE

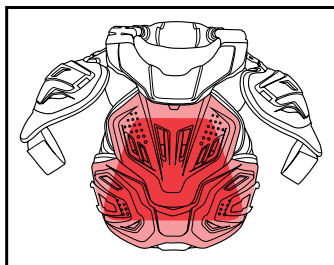


# FUSION

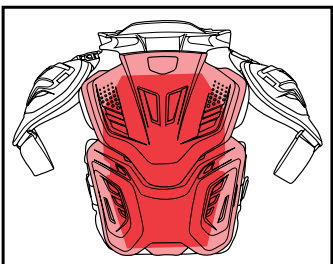
## PROTECTION



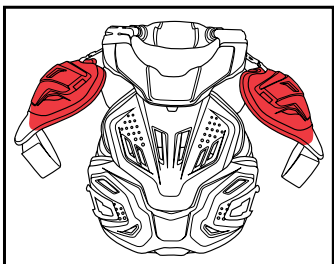
NECK PROTECTION



CHEST PROTECTION



BACK PROTECTION



SHOULDER PROTECTION

- Integrated neck and torso protection for Adult and Junior riders
- Neck protection CE certified as Personal Protective Equipment 89/686/EEC
- CE certified for impact protection,
  - 1621-2 Level 1 back
  - 1621-3 Level 1 front
  - 1621-1 Shoulders
- 3 dimensional designed for perfect fit
- Easy to use, no-tool, sizing adjustments for a precise fit
- Extra Flank padding
- Light weight
- Great comfort
- Well ventilated

Get more info at [www.leatt.com/fusion/](http://www.leatt.com/fusion/)





**FEATURE**





IF THERE IS ONE RIDER BEING PULLED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS FOR 2016 AND BEYOND THEN IT IS SPANISH AND BRITISH MX2 GRAND PRIX WINNER VALENTIN GUILLOD. ONLY THREE YEARS AGO THE SWISS HAD TO DROP OUT OF MXGP TO RESET AT EUROPEAN LEVEL. WE CHATTED TO HIM ABOUT THE RESURRECTION...

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer

# IN DEMAND



**W**e sat down with Valentin Guillod in the airy Standing Construct Yamaha awning for only fourteen minutes. The Swiss is subject to enquiries for his ability and his cheery demeanour as a professional racer but his name is now something that can be put in lights...And that means his time comes at a premium. Interviews, fans, signing sessions, TV spots; VG is a busy guy at Grands Prix these days and since he emerged as one of the very few riders since 2012 that can threaten MX2 supremo Jeffrey Herlings' regular win bonus.

Valentin is fantastically down-to-earth. The fact that he cannot converse for longer at the French Grand Prix is not his choice. As he jokes and starts messing around with my MP3 recorder he is also able to speak candidly and forthright about some of the issues that have helped him reach his current career-high peak of form and results. A slow season start with top ten-top five speed exploded into something much more potent at the Spanish round – the sixth appointment of eighteen early last month – and he has been a protagonist since. Even enthralled a largely partisan crowd in the second moto at Villars sous ecot in France where a brutal first lap collision with Damon Graulus would not stop him trawling back to the fringes of tenth spot with a damaged YZ250F. His battles in Spain and with Herlings in the UK have helped make MX2 unmissable viewing.

Valentin keeps talking even though two people from the team tell him at different points that the Yamaha Motor France poster session nearby is about to start. One of those figures is former GP winner and MX3 world champion Yves Demaria, Guillod's mentor for the last two and a half years and the man that guides '92' in pretty much everything he needs to do. After claiming the European EMX250 title in 2013

the duo have clearly been doing something right as Guillod grasped his first GP podiums on the Standing Construct KTM in 2014 and has now reach another high with the team's relatively new Yamaha equipment.

**It seems that no other rider in MXGP is attacking as much as you at the moment. Where did this come from?**

We worked really hard this winter and I felt really good with the Yamaha, even on the standard bike I was going pretty fast and playing around a lot. Now I think we have something that is even better and matches my style.

**So it is all about the bike...**

No, it is me also! All the work I did with Yves over the winter. I think it is a combination of things that made those results. The bike we talked about and I can move it better than the KTM last year. Physically I have worked harder and I feel two steps in front. In my head I feel better than last year. I approach the races differently. It is all about the package I suppose.

**When you say you approach the races differently...what does that mean?**

It sounds really stupid but from Saturday morning in Spain I said to myself "take your time to go fast". From that moment 'it' has happened for me. Before I wanted to go 'fast, fast!' and it wasn't working. After all this time I still wasn't using practice properly. I was going around, pushing and getting quicker but stressing about it. I just had to slow down a bit and put myself into race mode. As for the reason I have more confidence now...I am still not really sure. Last year I had the capacity and the quality to do the same results maybe but perhaps I was still not smart enough or mentally ready.







**It is interesting to hear that you 'slowed down' I have heard some people say the way you are riding now seems very on the edge...**

Actually those people are not watching the race because in England I did not make a single mistake...so I'm not at '200%'. Not even at '110%'. I am just riding with my style and at my speed.

**Maybe because you look so active and pretty spectacular on the bike...**

Exactly but I'm not doing anything strange. If you look then I am very clean and smooth on the bike and actually less aggressive than someone like Jeffrey [Herlings].

**You started the season as a top five guy and new to the Yamaha and have developed with the bike into a Grand Prix winner. How much of that has been down to the technology? How different is that YZ250F now to the stock model with which you won at the Geneva Supercross in the winter?**

In Geneva it was a bike right out of the box. This one...if you take the chassis then it is also totally standard, even the setting is the same. Even the rear spring is the same as people can buy. We worked on the engine to have it one step better compared to the beginning of the year and we hope in a month or so we will have another step thanks to Akira [Standing Construct's French tuning partner]. We are waiting for them because their work is still in development to get something better. Until now the tuning has been done by Wim [Van Hoof] and people around the team.

**One or two months is deep into the season. Why the delay?**

It is not because the material came late but because there were some agreements between Akira and Yamaha to finalise and that's why we had a delay.

**You seemed frustrated by your starts in some motos of the first GPs and there was also some other hitches. Was that part of the internal work you guys were doing...?**

Yeah...we had an electrical problem in the second moto in Argentina and that was because we had not practiced that much with the system through the winter. When it was new then it was fine but the time and mileage threw up some issues I think. Anyway we found the problem and solved it. Talking about the bike...







there was some material that arrived a bit late but the mechanics really worked around the clock to get it ready for racing. The only problem was that it didn't really match my style at the beginning of the year. It wasn't really what I was expecting. Last season everything was ready for the KTM and from Akira with the crank and other components and we rode with it during the winter. That was the big difference.

**You are undoubtedly one of the form guys in MXGP at the moment but only three years ago there were question marks over your career...**

I remember coming quite close to the front of the European Championship in 2010 and I had the chance to sign for two years with KTM Scott and I talked with my family because we were just a small private team and racing for a hobby. Now suddenly there was a contract with a GP team and it a ticket to the top level.



We took the offer but it did not work and then I got injured. I was practicing supercross and I broke my elbow and my wrist. On the morning of the operation I called Yves [Demaria] because my Dad had had contact with him in September or October of 2012. I told him I wanted to make results and be somebody good in motocross. I wanted to have a name and asked him what we could do. He said "if you want to ride in GP in 2013 then I'm not working with you, we go back to the Europeans. Get your elbow and wrist ready and then we start..." I was a bit shocked. I was a GP rider and did not want to go back to the Europeans. But then I calculated that I would be four months dealing with the injury and I would have missed two Grands Prix. EMX250 was starting in May so it was a good option.

### **Was that a hard phase of your career and life to handle?**

I don't think it was that hard because it was something that rolled along naturally because of the circumstances. It was a choice and a situation that I found myself in. I was happy to set new goals. The injury was pretty bad but if you look what happened since then I don't think about that at all.

### **Working with Yves was a culture shock?**

Not so much. When you see him from the outside then he is quite cold and shy but when we started to get to know each other then we began to laugh like fifteen year old kids. When we have to work then we work. From the beginning it was easy and we went step by step... but sometimes he was really hard. I remember last year in Maggiora [Italy] I was left crying in the truck. I was third for almost the whole of the second moto but crashed on the last lap and finished last.

### **And he obviously told you that wasn't good enough...**

Yes...and I learnt from that. Yves can really get going with his RPM! He is a character. I am used to it and I think I am someone who needs that. Someone who needs their ass kicking sometimes.

### **But you changed your residence and life to commit to the programme and the sport...**

Yes, but it was not an unusual move. From when I was fifteen I was used to moving around a lot. I'd go to Italy for a weekend, somewhere else for riding then back home for school. When I was sixteen I was staying for four months in the USA with a friend. The next year I was in Belgium a lot and from 2013 I have been living in the south of France.

### **So from going 'backwards' to EMX you are on the threshold of a forced step to MXGP for 2016 with a lot of manufacturers interested in your services; that's quite a turnaround...**

I have to go into MXGP, and to be honest it is not something I really want at this moment in time but if you look at my style then I think it will be good for the 450. MXGP is there...but I have some opportunities to keep on the 250s in the U.S. as well as an option here with Yamaha. We'll see...





# DEMARIA...

## What is the genesis of your collaboration with Valentin...?

I saw Valentin riding in 2012 and he clearly had something but he was a young guy and wasn't in shape. He came to GPs to play and not to work. At the end of the year I spoke with his father and when I stopped my collaboration with KRT and said: "you have a good kid... but he is not professional". We agreed to work together but I said to him that the level of the world championship was too high for Valentin and I preferred to 'restart' at the base. I made a small team for him at the European Championship. The goal was to win the title to go into GP again. The story started like that...

## What was Valentin's reaction to moving to the Europeans?

"I am a rider in the World Championship...!"...I said: "No, you are a baby at the moment and it is better to start in the European Championship or stay at home..." We started working in January and step-by-step we got to the top. My job is on the physical side, technical side: everything. I wanted to give 100% commitment. I go with him to the doctor, to test, on the bike, on the bicycle...and now I am happy with the work and progress he has made. He has good potential and is a good guy. His main problem is that one-week at home means he thinks he is on holiday. I work every day with him.

## What was the hardest part of turning him into a GP winner?

Everything!

## So you kicked his ass basically...

Yeah. He has great technique on the bike but before his attitude was not good and I'm talking about dedication, the diet, the mental side...he is a good guy and enjoys life but his attitude was not professional. Now he is getting good – not perfect – but better and better.

## I know he came to your house to live and train so you obviously got on well to have that 24-7 existence...

Yeah, he became like one of the family. For two years he lived in my home and this season he wanted to be a bit more independent...but then after three months he said "maybe it is better if I come back with you in the home" and I said "no, it is like this". He now lives one kilometre away!







# VICTORY

**CONGRATULATIONS RYAN DUNGEY** — THE 2015 450 SUPERCROSS CHAMPION!

SEALING THE CHAMPIONSHIP 3 RACES BEFORE SEASON'S END TAKES A LOT MORE THAN SIMPLE CONSISTENCY. HOLESOTS, SURGICAL PRECISION, NERVES OF STEEL, SHEER SPEED AND 3 TIMES MORE VICTORIES THAN ANY OTHER RIDER IN 2015. NO BACKING DOWN, NO QUITTING, NO WEAKNESS. EVER. 100% READY TO RACE AT EVERY ROUND.



**READY TO RACE**  
»» [www.ktm.com](http://www.ktm.com)



**KTM**



**SBK**

# NILOX PORTUGUESE ROUND

## AUTÓDROMO INTERNACIONAL DO ALGARVE

Race one winner: Jonathan Rea, Kawasaki

Race two winner: Jonathan Rea, Kawasaki





SBK POR

JUNE 7th · RND 7 of 13



TEN WINS NOW FROM FOURTEEN FOR JONATHAN REA AND THE IRISHMAN HAS YET TO DROP OUT OF THE TOP THREE NOR LOSE THE SBK SERIES LEAD. 124 POINTS (ALMOST FIVE RACES WITH TWELVE REMAINING) IS THE DIFFERENCE OVER TEAM-MATE TOM SYKES AFTER PORTUGAL

Blogs by Graeme Brown/Matthew Roberts  
Photos by Kawasaki/GeeBee/Ducati Corse Press/Milagro

# REA ANSWERS AT THE DOUBLE





More Ducati podium presence with both Davies and Guigliano sharing a third place each. Leon Haslam (above, centre) gets on the box for the sixth time in '15 and the first occasion since Aragon









# NUMBERS GAME...

By Graeme Brown

**T**he past weekend had the stalwarts of the SBK press corps thumbing through their history books to see if anyone had dominated the start of a season the way Jonathan Rea has.

Neil Hodgson won nine races on the trot at the start of 2003 on a run that saw him take 11 wins and a second place out of the first 12 races. This weekend Rea took another double victory to make his tally 10 wins out of 14 starts, with four runner-up positions. That puts him 15 points ahead of Hodgson's total at the same point in the season. Hodgson of course went to win the title with two rounds remaining.

We did however see the first sign of fallibility in what has been a perfect start to his Kawasaki career.

His tumble in Superpole meant he would start from the third row. I spoke to him on Saturday night and he was nursing a battered elbow and looking worried about the next day's races. He reckoned if he had any chance of a podium place he would have to get through the pack in front on the first couple of laps and keep a decent gap to team-mate Sykes and the Ducati's of Giugliano and Davies.

Sykes would be the man to beat. He needn't have worried. In the short run to the first corner in both races he sliced his way to the front and exited turn one in fourth place, right behind the aforementioned trio. Short shrift was made of the Ducatis on the next lap and he and Sykes battled away over the following laps. Rea acknowledged on Sunday that, even with the sudden cloud burst in race one, had Sykes not had some technical problems and a deflating tyre in race two he would have been hard to beat.

But beat him he did and left the pundits whispering "is it too early to ask about the title?"

I reckon so.

Despite Sunday's Sykes appears to be on a charge and the Ducati's are not too far behind. One small slip from JR and the 124 point gap he has amassed will disappear pretty quickly.

The end of season is in the sights of some people though and the mad rumours for 2016 have well and truly started. The best one for me was written by an Italian journalist in his weekly blog – "Yamaha to return to Superbike with Ten Kate and van der Mark?". Ten Kate Motoren is one, if not the biggest Honda dealership in the Netherlands. Owner and race team supremo Gerit Ten Kate has always insisted that the reason they go racing is to sell more motorcycles – a true exponent of the Big H mantra – win on Sunday sell on Monday. So winning on a Yamaha on Sunday and selling.....ah! I see a problem there.

The calendar for 2016 has also come up for discussion and the perennial question about a return to Portimao was top of that agenda. Some reckon this was the final, final farewell and indeed the CEO of the track said in his programme notes that it was getting harder to make the financial case for holding the race. They have another year on their contract so we may be back but one track that may see a return to the calendar is Monza. A lot has to be done to satisfy the safety worries but one team's marketing coordinator was happily fanning the flames of Portimao's funeral pyre.







“We don’t recommend sponsors come here because if they saw that there were no people watching they would probably reconsider their deal. I would much rather have three races in Italy with big crowds than one race in Portugal with no fans.”

Next stop? Italy, Misano and another rumour. It would seem that the Roman Emperor is about to make another comeback, or is he more of a Lazarus character? Anyway Max Biaggi will make a return to racing with Aprilia at the next round.....allegedly. “I can’t comment but it will be confirmed on Friday” was the line I was given.

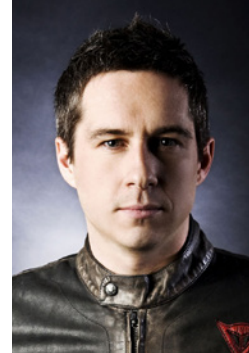
A vain attempt to cajole people away from the beach and their gelato I reckon.





# SLINGS AND ARROWS...

By Matthew Roberts



**W**hen it rains, it pours.

Technically, that wasn't quite the case at Portimao on Sunday but Tom Sykes could be forgiven for feeling that way after a pivotal weekend in the World Superbike Championship. After his ZX-10R started cutting out on the penultimate lap of a flag-to-flag race one in Portugal, allowing Jonathan Rea to romp to victory, Tom's attempt to haul back points on his factory Kawasaki team-mate were foiled in race two by a flat tyre.

The seventh of thirteen rounds saw Rea arrive in Portugal with a 101-point advantage over Leon Haslam at the top, with Sykes just a further point behind after his third consecutive home double at Donington Park in the previous meeting. The Yorkshireman looked to have his mojo back after that record-breaking performance in Derbyshire and with the confidence that flowed back through the bars of the ZX-10R he rode to the title just 18 months ago came a flicker of hope that this year's challenge may just be back on, with more than half a season still remaining.

On Sunday morning the flicker was becoming a flame, with Sykes fastest in warm-up and ready to charge from the front row of the grid, with Rea back in eighth. However, the dark clouds that drifted in from the Atlantic soon began to cast a shadow over his chances and the spots of rain that fell inadvertently extinguished all hope. A gamble to stay out on slicks for one extra lap on his first bike looked to have paid off, but the climax to an enthralling slow dance from the two 'number two' Kawasakis never materialised when Tom's developed a mapping problem that prevented it from revving beyond 9,000 RPM.

Sykes' bad luck, compounded in race two, was disappointing for the championship, not just because of the dropped points but for a missed opportunity to answer the doubters. The criticism thrown his way since the start of this season is that Rea is the more adaptable, more versatile rider, and the changes in regulations have not affected him the same as Sykes because his package is an improvement on what he had last season. Instead of perhaps hankering for what he used to have, Rea is simply delighted to be finally off the Honda and on a machine with race-winning potential in any conditions.

In any sport confidence breeds success but nowhere is this old adage more true than in motorcycle racing. A turning-point in the season that could have seen Sykes take the initiative, instead swung the other way and now it is Rea again with the figurative - as well as the mathematical - upper hand. His record of ten wins and four seconds places from the first fourteen races of the season is unprecedented and his lead of 124 points is, surely, insurmountable.

When it comes to highlighting the importance of confidence in motorcycle racing, there can be few starker examples in the history of the sport than that of Nico Terol, who on Monday announced that he would be splitting with the Althea Racing Team with immediate effect. Winner of the 125cc World Championship in 2011, Terol's career has been in bizarre free-fall since a glorious end to 2013, which he wrapped up with a third victory of the Moto2 season at Valencia.



A disastrous 2014 started with an engine failure in the first race in Qatar, whilst at round two in Texas - where the previous season he had taken victory and set the lap record - he qualified 26th and was involved in a multi-rider pile-up in turn one. Things went from bad to worse for Nico in a season that saw him collect just two championship points and miss the British Grand Prix with a major confidence crisis, explained away as 'muscle fatigue.' He returned for the following round at Misano with no further explanation of the issue, but results did not pick up and one year on from that glorious last win at Valencia, he left his home circuit and the Grand Prix paddock through the back door.

To me it seemed that Terol was a classic two-stroke Grand Prix graduate who could only perform when everything was right. His main virtues are consistency and accuracy and when the bike was in tune - like his factory 125cc Aprilia in 2011 - he had the attributes to make

it sing. Unfortunately, his quest for perfection often left him chasing a set-up until the Monday after the race, by which time the rest of the paddock had packed up and left. The switch to Superbikes was therefore doomed to failure, in my opinion, and now Terol must look to reinvent himself again.


I reckon Tom Sykes might have an inkling of how that feels. Like I said, when it rains, it pours...











By Eric Johnson  
Photos by Kawasaki/GeeBee images

# HAMMERLESS NAIL

EJ CHEWS THE FAT WITH KAWASAKI'S TOM SYKES  
ABOUT THE SWING IN STATUS QUO WITHIN THE  
DOMINANT TEAM OF WORLD SUPERBIKE



***“We have had special memories at Donington in the last two years and it would be nice after the difficulty of the start of the season to feel that kind of magic again.”***

This was Yorkshireman Tom Sykes speaking after flashing to duel runner-up finishes at the eni FIM Superbike World Championship round at Imola, Italy. Up to this sixth round of the globetrotting tour it had been something of a star-crossed campaign for the 2013 WSBK World Champion. But Imola provided inspiration and the approaching Donington round provided hope. Out of sorts with his 2015 Kawasaki ZX-10R – a bike he had swung a huge lamp over the past four years (“I have put so much work into the bike I would not want to give my baby away to someone else!” Sykes exclaimed upon signing a new contract to remain with the Kawasaki Racing Team through 2016 – Sykes and longtime crew chief Marcel Duinker struggled to come to grips (literally) with the new FIM-dictated technical regulations for 2015. Further compounding the dynamic duo’s frustrations during the opening phase of the season was the fact that KRT newcomer Jonathan Rea had hit the asphalt running, winning everything that came in his way. Both undaunted and undeterred, Sykes and company kept chipping away at it until the results started to come. And that they truly did at Donington Park where Sykes did the double in scoring his first two race wins of ’15. In was a hard fought result(s) in more ways than one and one that poured the coals to what he plans to be another title run. And so it was at Portimao – the halfway mark of the season – where Tom Sykes spoke about his recent resurgence; a phase that would be both bolstered by a race one podium behind Rea and deflated like his rear tyre in race two that dropped him to eighth place...

**Tom, what did the two wins at Donington mean to you? You’re not the kind of guy that ever gives up and those wins were long in coming, weren’t they?**

It was all a good step in the right direction. You know it’s been a frustrating, and let’s say a slow period. Basically we had some rule changes over the winter and a bike I’d kind-of gone through with a fine toothcomb over the last three or four years take a big step backwards on me. I really felt limited on what I could do with the bike and my first comment to my crew chief Marcel [Duinker] after riding it was – and I remember this so clearly – “Unfortunately, I now feel like I am riding the bike and not racing. I feel so handicapped or disadvantaged to what I’ve previously had.” So, yeah, it’s taken a lot of time but I feel now that we’re on the right road. We had a little bit of input during the winter testing which was outside of our control which was perhaps wasn’t what we needed. I could only put this down to experience and a learning curve.

**What was changed on the ZX-10R and did the changes to the motorcycle come as a result of the revised technical regulations for 2015?**

Without saying too much – because I can’t obviously say too much – the technical regulations really changed the... Let’s say changed the engine character. We had to change a lot of things and finally the inertia of the engine really increased and suddenly I wasn’t able to do what I had been doing for three or four years. As soon as I left pitlane on day one of testing back in November at Aragon I knew that we had a lot of work to do. Like I said, it was a big shock to me and after some time I’ve provided some input from my riding and Marcel is the guy who puts in the input from the technical side and gives a better balance of bike to go racing with. Like I said, I feel like we’re on the correct path now and that’s the main thing. We have a lot of time to react and respond so let’s keep pushing.



TOM SYKES





**"THINGS HAPPEN WHEN YOU'RE RACING AND POINTS ARE LOST AND WON FAR TOO EASY. ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN AND THAT'S WHY I'M HAPPY KNOWING THAT HOPEFULLY WE'VE TURNED THIS CORNER. ..."**





TOM SYKES







**Going back to what you said about basically bringing the ZX-10R to life, was it better for Jonathan Rea that he came to the Kawasaki Racing Team – and the ZX-10R – as a total stranger? In other words, he didn't know the bike like you did...**

Correct. Of course, for him he didn't know the advantages that we had. You know Jonathan is a bit taller and just from my opinion, and it's only my opinion, maybe I'm wrong or maybe I'm right, honestly speaking, I think his timing couldn't have been better, you know? The bike really suited a very flowing style and everybody who has seen Jonathan over the years knows he has a very flowing style. He's quite easy on the gas and etcetera. He got on the bike and the two of them were in harmony. We had a lot of work to do. Through a lot of trial and error, and we sacrificed some of the races because we were still testing, we lost a lot of ground. It was a big shame, but that's part of racing and we can try and make up for that lost ground.

**I don't mean this in a bad way, but when Jonathan came into the team and started to excel almost immediately, did you catch yourself thinking, "Hey, this is my bike and my team!" Do you know what I mean?**

(Laughter) For sure there's always some kind of personal pride because finally people who recognized myself and some key members of the team had worked hard, and with the help from Kawasaki, in four years we came from nowhere to challenge for the title three consecutive years. So, yeah, I do feel very proud to be part of that and I do feel lucky that I'm able to give that feedback to develop the bike. Finally, at the end of the day, when Jonathan was winning races, fair play to him. The Kawasaki badge on my sleeve, that's good. That's what we go racing for. You know it was weird because at least I knew the machine was capable of winning. It just meant that we had to get things to work for my style.



**How would you describe your style, Tom?**

In the past I would say that I could get it into the corners fast, turn and get out of the corners fast. That's worked good in the past, but you've also seen it work against me at some circuits and in some weather conditions. At the end of the day I'm very confident in my ability and I'm maybe even more confident with the guys working for me. All my mechanics, even my tyre man, everybody. I've got a great team and even with the terrible start to the season, those guys were 110 percent behind me. On a bad day when all the mechanics and everybody are still patting me on the back and still believing in me, that's just what I need and for that reason, that's why we keep pushing. When I saw those guys celebrating on the pit wall at Donington Park that makes up for it. I adjusted a little bit with small things in my style but finally the biggest improvement was bringing the bike back towards me. There was only so much we could do. We knew we had some advantages in the past and that we needed to keep those. Yeah, we're not stupid. It's easy for people to judge early in the season, but we'll keep working.

**Race One at Donington was more like super-cross with the way you and Jonathan were pointing and shooting and cutting and thrusting with one another. It was just an awesome race to watch...**

(Laughter) Yeah, I've had so many comments and good feedback from that race. If I have to say, I watched it a couple of times and for the Kawasaki Racing Team that was a hell of a race, you know? I think it was a very good show because there were a lot of different strategies. There were a couple different strategies from me and a couple from Rea. He was keen to get in front and hold the pace and he made a lot of late and hard moves to block pass me and try and stop me a little bit. After a few times I knew his strategies so we had to react. So when he was passing me on the brakes, and I'm not the slowest on the brakes, so he wasn't able to quite pull it to the apex and I saw a gap so I took it. In the past races I didn't have the feedback and confidence from my bike so I wasn't able to do

that. Now we're just about there of where we need to be and I'm going to start putting those moves back on the guys and returning the favour. That's what it's all about.

**I have to ask you: How were you and Jonathan with each other after you got off the bikes?**

Absolutely no problem. Some of the English commentators were really surprised when we shook hands after the race. We saw that there was just about contact on two occasions in the race, but I think he knew I had some advantages in some areas and likewise for him. Of course there were some moments where we touched almost, but nah, we're two good riders. They say rubbing is racing and if we would have been knocking each other about I'm sure that the after-race interview would have been different but there were absolutely no hard feelings and we went on to race two.

**And you essentially cleared right off from the start in Race Two, didn't you?**

Yeah, correct. Rea and Haslam and those guys knew they had to disturb me but after a full race under my hat I knew where my bike was really working and where we suffering. I could see that Jonathan had some rear traction advantage compared to me in quite a lot of areas in race number one. My plan was to get a good start, which we managed to do, and walk away. We just dropped the hammer. To get that kind of gap in a World Championship race is very satisfying. For me, that was great. The bike was giving me great feedback and I was able to be really consistent and for the first time this year we had some consistency from the rear grip.

**There are still quite a few races to run and you can still have a shot at this title, don't you...?**

Oh Jesus! No question. Yeah, there are still at least four people with a possibility to win it. Things happen when you're racing and points are lost and won far too easy. Anything can happen and that's why I'm happy knowing that hopefully we've turned this corner. Now we need to push on.



# *The Piston of Choice For Top Riders*



*Ryan  
Villopoto  
Team Kawasaki KRT*



*Gautier  
Paulin  
Team Honda HRC*



*Jeremy  
Van Horebeek  
Team Yamaha YME*



PISTONS

RACERS CHOICE LINE

CLUTCH KIT

CAMCHAINS

VALVES

GASKETS



**info @vertexpistons.com - www.vertexpistons.com**





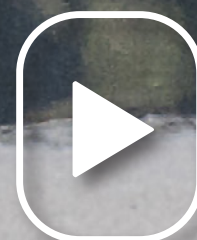
**MOTOGP**





MotoGP ITA

THE ROLE REVERSAL IN MOTOGP ON THE EVE OF THE GRAN PREMI DE CATALUNYA COMPARED TO THIS TIME TWELVE MONTHS AGO HAS PLENTY OF PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT YAMAHA, MARQUEZ AND HONDA. TWO INSIGHTFUL BLOGS FROM GAVIN AND DAVID TRY TO GET TO THE HEART OF WHY THE REIGNING CHAMPION IS PLAYING CATCH-UP. ROUND SEVEN OF 2015 WILL HEAD TO BARCELONA BUT MARTIN HEATH CAPTURED SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM ITALY AND MUGELLO



PLAY

Photos by Martin Heath

# YAMAHA DELUGE





Jorge Lorenzo likes to stamp Mugello as Lorenzo's Land (and he now has four victories at the place from the last six years) but there is only one rider that really matter for the public on the hillsides









88 podiums in MotoGP now for Lorenzo makes him the fourth most successful in the history of the class. He needs just six more to overtake Dani Pedrosa and become the top Spaniard. Valentino Rossi currently has 165. The crowds showed up in Italy for the 30th running of a GP at Mugello











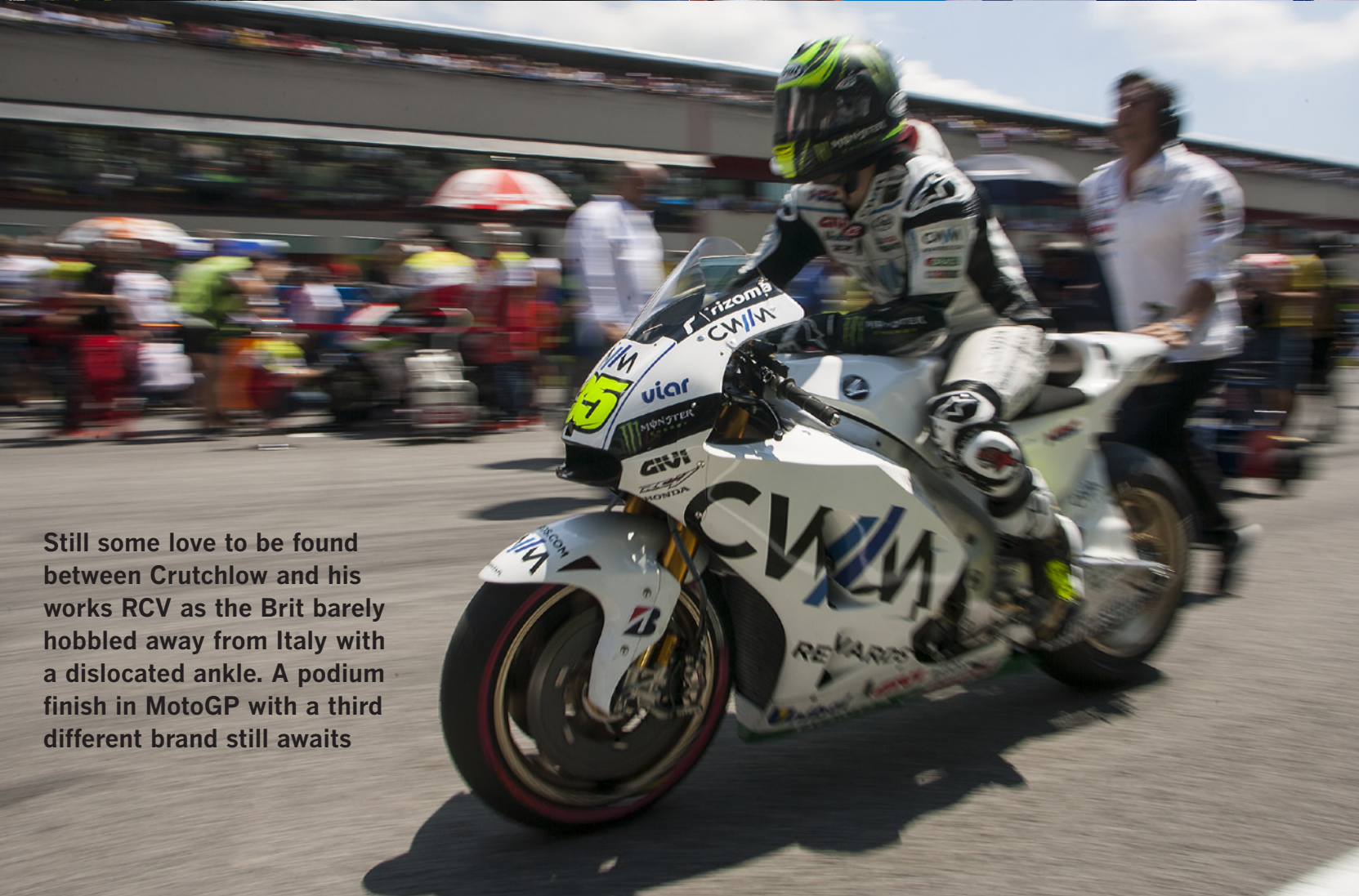
A fist-pumping finish for Andrea Iannone (below) on the Ducati for his second MotoGP podium. The Italian had good previous at Mugello with two Moto2 victories







MotoGP ITA



Still some love to be found between Crutchlow and his works RCV as the Brit barely hobbled away from Italy with a dislocated ankle. A podium finish in MotoGP with a third different brand still awaits



**PLACE  
YOUR  
ADVERT  
HERE!**

*For publicity opportunities contact us at  
[info@ontrackoffroad.com](mailto:info@ontrackoffroad.com)*



**MotoGP****BLOG**

# TOO FAR...??

By Gavin Emmett



In my last blog for OTOR I discussed the apparent strengths of the Yamaha this season, and this was eventually borne out with Jorge Lorenzo sealing a third victory in a row at a buzzing Mugello event. It marked the tuning fork brand's fifth win out of six races so far this year, and Honda are starting to look like they are in a seriously bad place.

Despite another incredible start in which Marc Marquez carved his way through from 13th on the grid to second place, it was so vividly obvious where the Honda's troubles lay lap after lap at Mugello. Getting the bike stopped in aggressive braking zones, such as at turn one in Italy, is proving a major bugbear, not to mention dragging the bike out of the corner at the other side.

A number of times we saw the double world champ forced to invent his own lines through San Donato, his explanation being that whilst in the past he was able to slide the bike as he wanted into a corner and get it set, now the bike gets out of shape of its own accord, and it just simply isn't as easy to control.

A new electronics package arrived in Mugello which was supposed to alleviate this, but clearly by the race it still wasn't where it needed to be. A new swingarm is in the pipeline, and Honda know that they need to produce something quickly.

I actually didn't think things looked too disastrous for Marc and Honda before Mugello – yes they were a long way back in the championship already, but as far as I was concerned there had been mitigating circumstances. He made a tiny error in Qatar and got hung out to dry at turn one, eventually powering through the field to finish a creditable fifth. After a victory in Austin, there was the clash with Rossi in Argentina, the gamble of running with the softer tyre had not paid off by just a couple of laps don't forget.

Another comfortable second place came in Jerez, where he maintained his advantage over Rossi, and then was caught out by a sudden and dramatic rise in temperatures on race-day in France where he limped to fourth.

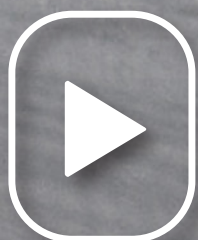
Then came Italy, and the crowds baying for Spanish blood (the boos below the podium only add fuel to Lorenzo's fire). Marquez had a disaster in practice, but still brought his A-game come the race. That was until he crashed by squeezing the limit one too many times.

Some will say he should have just taken what points he could both in Italy and Argentina – and the championship would have a very different feel now if he had - but that's just not how Marquez rides. Anyone who has watched his meteoric rise through the ranks has witnessed him dusting himself down more often than his rivals in the search for glory.

The biggest problem for Marquez is that even by winning a majority of the races left, or riding to pick up points when he can, he still has to make 49 points on a super-consistent Rossi (off the podium just once in the last 15 races) and 43 on Lorenzo who is cutting a groove into the track once again and has only been outside the top five once since Germany last year. When Lorenzo won the championship in 2010 and 2012, he missed out on the podium just twice – he's already missed three this season.

Catching one of those two wouldn't surprise you, but both? I just can't see such a dramatic fall from grace unless Ducati start winning or Pedrosa gets involved now he's nearing full fitness. It would be a glorious turnaround if Marquez were to make it, but the odds just don't stack up as things stand, never mind what technical solutions Honda may bring to the party.





PLAY







# HEROICS...

By David Emmett [www.motomatters.com](http://www.motomatters.com)

**“H**ero to zero” is one of my least favourite pieces of journalistic shorthand. Though the assonance may be pleasing to the ear, the binary nature of the phrase removes all nuances from the situation it is meant to describe. It offers a black and white version of reality, whereas the truth is almost invariably a vast, shifting canvas of a million shades of grey. And much, much more interesting for not being so straightforward.

The latest victim of the “hero to zero” moniker is none other than reigning MotoGP champion Marc Márquez. After taking his first championship in his rookie season, then following it up with his second title in a row – and joining a very elite club of riders to win successive premier class titles – Márquez looked pretty much invincible. He started every race as favourite, and we were surprised when he finished off the podium. But since the start of the year, Márquez has seemed very human indeed, languishing in fifth spot in the championship, 49 points behind the leader Valentino Rossi, and 43 behind Jorge Lorenzo after the first six races. He has won just a single round, the Grand Prix of the Americas in Austin, a track at which he has dominated since it first appeared on the calendar.

So is Márquez now washed up? Has he gone from hero to zero, from invincible to thoroughly mortal over the space of winter testing? To describe it like that does not do the situation justice in any way, shape or form. Firstly, the sudden reversal in Márquez’ form did not happen overnight, or rather, between Valencia and Qatar. Secondly, it is not so much that Márquez is out of form, but rather that the Honda no longer has an edge on the competition. And thirdly, it is not a matter of Honda going backwards as Márquez’ rivals and their bikes taking huge steps forward.

First, Márquez’ change of fortunes. It is easy to think that this was a sudden development. Márquez’ devastating start to the 2014 season made a lasting impression: winning the first ten races in a row, and starting from pole for eight of them made him look unbeatable. So in awe were we of his performances that we forgot to look at the other factors contributing to the Repsol Honda rider’s success. His team-mate Dani Pedrosa struggled with arm pump in the early races, having surgery to try to fix it before Jerez. 2013 runner-up Jorge Lorenzo had started the term overweight and out of shape, and was struggling with both the changes to the 2014 Bridgestone tyres and the reduction in fuel allowance from 21 to 20 litres for each race. Valentino Rossi was rebuilding after a disappointing first year back with Yamaha, taking a while to get into his stride. Gigi Dall’Igna had only just arrived at Ducati and was very slowly introducing minor changes to the still uncompetitive Desmosedici GP14. Though Marc Márquez was undoubtedly making victory look easy, his rivals were giving him a helping hand.

Márquez did not have it so easy in the second half of the year, though. He was still winning races, but at a much-reduced rate, taking three victories from the last eight, with Lorenzo and Rossi earning two wins each. The Yamaha had improved markedly, the throttle response now much smoother, thanks in part to a new exhaust system. Bridgestone had modified their tyres once again, to provide fractionally more edge grip. Lorenzo was back in shape and back in form, and Rossi’s adaptation of his riding style to match Márquez was starting to bear fruit. The pendulum swung even further away from Márquez and Honda over the winter, Yamaha bringing the fully seamless gearbox and a revised chassis to help improve braking. Ducati introduced the GP15, a bike that is faster than the Honda and has the





handling of the Yamaha, and has turned Andrea Dovizioso and Andrea Iannone into consistent podium threats. Where Márquez was on-average just over a second faster over race distance between 2014 and 2015, the Yamaha was some 11 seconds quicker, and Ducati gained over 17 seconds per race since last year.

The decline of Márquez and the Honda is visible both in points and in positions. Marc Márquez averaged just over 20 points per race throughout the 18 races of the 2014 season. Over the last 18 races – the last 12 races of 2014 and the first six of 2015 – that has dropped to 15.6 points per race. His average over the last six races of 2014 and the first six of 2015 has declined even further, to 11.9 points per race. He has crashed out twice in the six rounds of 2015. Include the second half of last year and he has three zeroes from nine races, plus two crashes from the previous three, bringing his total race falls up to five out of twelve, though he remounted to score points at both Aragon and Misano.

Two factors point to the problem being about the bike, rather than a real difference in Márquez. The reigning champ may only have two podiums from the last six races, but he has started from pole for three of them and been on the front row of two more. The fact that Márquez can still qualify so well – and quite brilliantly at Austin, leaping over the pit wall and sprinting back to grab his second bike, then going to bag pole position – shows that the bike is still fast, when pushed to the limit. The trouble is, that speed comes with a lot of risk. Márquez, Cal Crutchlow and Scott Redding have all crashed out of two races each so far this year. None of the factory Yamaha or Ducati riders have suffered a single race crash, and Pol Espargaro is the only satellite Yamaha man to crash out, and that was because the Tech 3 man was torpedoed by Redding on the Marc VDS Honda at Austin.

So what is the problem? The root cause of the flaw in the Honda's handling is its engine. Fearing being outgunned by the Ducati GP15 along the straights, HRC have pursued more power for the RC213V, despite a promise to make the bike more manageable. A vicious engine can be tamed by electronics on corner exit, but corner entry is much more difficult indeed. The normal way to smooth corner entry is to reduce engine braking with a dab of fuel, the ECU managing the throttle on the way into the corner to produce exactly the right amount of back torque. But a more powerful engine demands more fuel to run smoothly, leaving less to spare for engine braking, making the rear wheel lock up and behave unpredictably on the way into the corner. "Last year, I can slide the rear into the corner," Márquez keeps telling us after every race. "But this year, I cannot control the slide." Unpredictable engine braking means that all of the Honda riders are relying almost exclusively on the front brake to stop the bike, with little or no assistance from the rear. That loads the front tire, and when trying to stay with Yamahas and Ducatis which have suddenly gotten a lot faster, it is easy to push just a little bit too much, and end up on your face.

Does this make Márquez a 'zero' all of a sudden? Absolutely not. Márquez is riding as well as he did last year, and is as committed to trying to win. Staying with the Yamahas and the Ducatis has become a lot harder, though, and needs a lot more risk to achieve. Motorcycle racing is all about managing risk, shifting the variables about to achieve the results you are after. At the moment, the sums are not adding up for Márquez and for Honda. But this Márquez and Honda we are talking about. They will jiggle the equations about until they do add up again.



# OUT OF THE SHADE

By Adam Wheeler, Portraits by Ray Archer, Action by Martin Heath

THREE WINS AND FIVE PODIUMS IN SIX ROUNDS BEFORE MOTOGP HEADS TO CATALUNYA THIS WEEKEND MEANS THAT DANNY KENT IS VERY MUCH THE MAN TO CATCH IN MOTO3. WE MANAGED TO SQUARE-WAY TEN MINUTES WITH THE 21 YEAR OLD BRIT AT THE RECENT MXGP BRITISH GRAND PRIX TO GAIN SOME INSIGHT INTO HIS ELECTRIC SEASON-START WITH THE LEOPARD RACING HONDA...







**T**hree wins and five podiums in six rounds before MotoGP heads to Catalunya this weekend means that Danny Kent is very much the man to catch in Moto3. We managed to square-way ten minutes with the 21 year old Brit at the recent MXGP British Grand Prix to gain some insight into his electric season-start with the Leopard Racing Honda...

Danny Kent's name has been hovering around the periphery of MotoGP recognition since 2011-2012; seasons which were the first full-time campaigns for '52'. Kent became one of the few British Grand Prix race winners in the modern age when he took a works KTM to the chequered flag in Japan and Valencia in that 2012 term (joining the likes of Bradley Smith and Scott Redding in the history books since 2000). Since then an ill-judged move to Moto2 (2013) and a year getting back into the swing of Moto3 (with Husqvarna in 2014) mean that he now has the experience and grounding to front the chase in the sport's most frantic and pulse-raising category.

2015 is his fifth season as a Grand Prix rider and he has steered a different bike in every attempt. It now looks as though he has the ingredients with which to mount a valid title assault thanks to the Kiefer set-up with their distinctive Leopard Energy drink livery (the product was launched in Mugello almost two weeks ago).

Wandering around the paddock at Matterley Basin for his first taste of MXGP we spoke to Danny – an articulate and thoughtful talker – in the confines of the HRC hospitality to get his views on Moto3 and sampling life as a championship leader...





DANNY KENT









**OK, so, thoughts on MXGP?**

This is actually the first GP I've been to and I haven't seen much of it yet! I've been to some of the smaller [motocross] events because I know people there. I just try to stick riding on-road to be honest because you see a lot of people getting injured doing motocross. That said I am about to get a new Honda motocross bike for some training so we'll just try to keep on tracks with small jumps! I had a bike last year from Husqvarna and I used it every now and then because it is good for the fitness and dealing with arm-pump but for me in Moto3 I'm not suffering with it so much.

**The fact that we are sitting here doing an interview, Honda are giving you bikes, you are being recognised more and more and there is demand for your time...is this indicative that you're in a hot phase of your career? The best streak yet?**

Yeah, you have to expect these things and changes when you are leading the world championship and you are winning races. You expect the media to be there. We are doing our job by taking those races and the TV companies and photographers and journalists are doing theirs. When the results come then it is good for me as well because as you said it is raising my profile. I'm social networking more and getting noticed. It is good for everyone.

**It is a new thing to learn though? You've had to get your head around a new motorcycle almost every season and now this is something else...**

It is a little bit like that. Before when the results were not there then after practice I'd have maybe one interview and then I'd be free. Now I have a schedule of where I have to be and when. I have to be a lot more organised compared to before.

**If you look at your career or your 'CV' then it seems like you have chopped-and-changed around a lot with teams and bikes. In one way you could say that has given you good experience and built character. In another way it must have been a big ball-ache every year...**

Yeah, it was a bit of a ball-ache but I think that is why we are so strong now. Making all those changes with different teams and bikes. Last year we struggled at the beginning of the season but got stronger and stronger as we went on. I think that was down to me coming back to Moto3 and getting used to the bike. This year has been like a dream start.

**Has there been a wrong step or move in the last few years? A feeling of 'shit, I've lost a season here...'??**

Yeah, to be honest I think 2013 and going to Moto2 was a waste of a year for me. When I look back now if I could change something then I would have stayed in Moto3 and maybe tried to fight for the championship in 2014. Moto2 was a waste but I am making up for it this year.

**How would you summarise that term with Husqvarna in 2014? What can you take from it?**

Basically getting used to Moto3 again. We put a lot of pressure on ourselves in 2014. I wanted to win the championship but I didn't really take into account that in 2012 the lap-times were a second to a second-and-a-half slower than when I came back with Husqvarna so I think that's why we struggled. I had to get used to the class again but we also needed to be faster. Like I said, it got better as we went on and I was fighting for podiums. Unfortunately in the last four races I had team orders that I was not allowed to finish in front of Jack [Miller]. I think I could have had a few more podiums. I knew at the end of 2014 that if I stayed in Moto3 with a good team and a good bike that I would be right there for the championship and we are doing exactly that.



**Was there a point last season where you looked at a Honda and thought ‘they’ve upped their game...I need one of those’?**

Yeah. Honda is such a big company and you could see how well Alex Marquez and Alex Rins were doing last year. I watched Rins’ riding style and it is quite similar to mine. I spoke to him and asked what the Honda was like and he said he believed it would suit me. The first time I sat on it - after the final GP of 2014 at Valencia - I only did the afternoon session but I immediately went half a second faster than what I had managed on the Husqvarna during the race weekend. That gave me so much motivation in the winter with my training and through pre-season; knowing that I was on a good bike and good team. I worked hard on my fitness and lost a bit of weight.

**You must have been rubbing your hands after that first test...**

It was a big relief. When you sign a contract to ride for a different team and on a different bike then you arrive to that point when you first get there and sit on the motorcycle and you think either ‘yeah, I love this bike’ or ‘oh no, what have I signed for’. Literally after just forty laps around Valencia I was faster...and faster than the Pole Position time. It was a relief.

**That first win in Texas this April...you were a pretty cool customer afterwards...like you’d just been for a quick blast...**

[smiles] To take that first win so early in the year....I just didn’t want to get too carried away. It is so easy to do that, especially when a couple of wins come along. It is an eighteen race championship. I just wanted to keep my feet on the ground.

**But you must have been screaming in your helmet at that one...**

Oh yeah! Inside I was over the moon...and I think that’s normal when you have just won a Moto3 race by over eight and a half seconds and that’s a first in the class. Like I said, I tried to keep calm and in a little bubble and concentrated on the job.

**Was it a good feeling to be able to silence the people that might have written you off as someone that will never rise to the top?**

Even when I was in the Red Bull team I was not the number one rider and it is quite clear that if you are not in that position then you will not be fighting for a championship. That was the base of my decision for this year. I wanted to be with a team that would concentrate 100% on me and put all their belief into me. I never had that with KTM. I think we have the whole package this year. Honda have given us a good bike, the team are good and they won the championship with Stefan Bradl in Moto2. We have everything we need.

**Moto3 seems as stressful as it is fun. It must be hard to know where you are and the others also. I imagine races must sometimes feel like three laps instead of twenty-odd...**

Absolutely. Sometimes you can be fighting up to fifteen riders. You can look at your pit-board and see that there are only three or four laps left. It goes so fast. Sometimes it can be very frustrating, like in Qatar. There is a big group and you come into the last corner and it is anyone’s race. It doesn’t matter how fast you are or you have been half a second quicker all weekend you can only make it across that line in eighth or ninth, it can be very disappointing. However we have shown in Austin and Argentina that you can actually pull away. It is not easy but it can be done.

**And that intensity goes all the way down to the last laps...look at Valencia for the past couple of seasons where the title has been decided at the death...**

Yeah...it is not easy! Like at Le Mans, it was better for me just to aim for a podium than to crash and lose something like fifteen points because, as we have seen, every one counts. You do look around you and see who is close in the championship and what they are doing and what positions they hold. In France I think we did a good job by accepting fourth and taking the points.





**The team are established and it is easy to spot you thanks to that bright blue livery and a new sponsor to Grand Prix. What is it like working with that whole set-up?**

It is very professional and the sponsors have given the team a very good budget for the year. We have the best material and the box, the trailer and everything is the best you can get. Like I said before, the whole package with Honda, the team and the sponsor is perfect. We have everything we need.

**Have you tasted Leopard yet?**

Yeah! It's nice. Do you like ginger?

**It's OK. There is pear as well isn't there?**

Ginger, pear; it is all-natural.

**Lastly, the British Grand Prix is coming up. It's going to be a big one for you. A bit of a pressure cooker?**

Nah, no pressure really. Obviously there will be a few more things to do at my home Grand Prix. I have to expect it. If we go to Silverstone and an English rider is leading the world championship then the media will want to jump on and do as much as possible. I'm there to do my job and we'll make a good plan for the weekend and I'll be ready for it.





# NO SHO

—  
Some see life as a challenging track  
toward success, glory and podiums.  
Some just see a track.



▶ ADAM CIANCARULO

RT CUTS





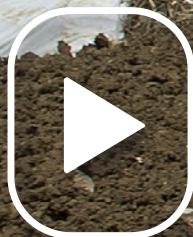
**MX**

# GRAND PRIX OF FRANCE

VILLARS SOUS ECOT · MAY 31st · Rnd 8 of 18

MXGP winner: Romain Febvre, Yamaha

MX2 winner: Jeffrey Herlings, KTM



**PLAY**



MXGP FRA

# THE FIRST

A LARGE CROWD – 45,000 – SURROUNDED THE STONY HARD-PACK OF VILLARS SOUS ECOT, A GRAND PRIX VENUE AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1998, FOR THE FRENCH ROUND OF MXGP... AND THE THRONG WERE THRILLED WHEN ONE OF THEIR OWN TASTED MAIDEN VICTORY IN THE PREMIER CLASS

By Adam Wheeler  
Photos by Ray Archer

A first podium three weeks earlier in Spain, a first moto victory the previous weekend in Great Britain and a maiden overall victory at his home GP in France; you cannot accuse MXGP rookie Romain Febvre of standing still





Fantastic racing again between Guillod - leading - and Herlings (who had slipped off while in front in the first moto) had the crowd on their feet. A large Swiss contingent meant that the majority of the public were for the Yamaha man





The end of another title tilt for Clement Desalle with an injured left shoulder? Cairoli moves up to second place and was watched by Formula One star Kimi Raikkonen...











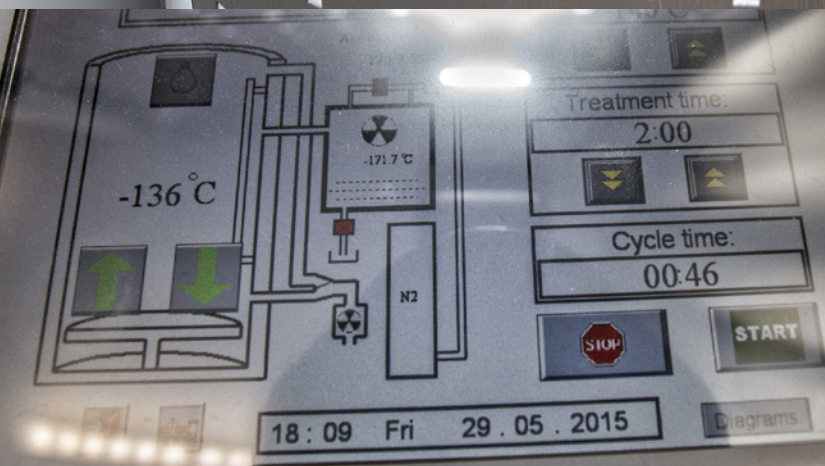
Febvre's debut season in MXGP and with Yamaha has been nothing short of a revelation. Expect the factory team to be wrapping up another contract with the Frenchman any time soon...



Max Nagl missed the MXGP podium for the second time in a row this season but came out of France with his championship lead extended by fifteen points. The German now has Cairoli firmly on his rear wheel for the red plate.







Cryotherapy comes to MXGP. 24MX Honda's Christophe Charlier is one of the first to try the 100,000 euro 'sauna' for a two minute spell at temperatures that drop to -145C.

The chamber is the latest edition to the Clinic Medical Mobile run by the Ramel family (left) and further upgrades will include a full body scanner by September bringing the value of MXGP's medical provisions close to the two million euro mark in terms of equipment.

The Cryosauna is said to aid recovery, assist with the treatment for injuries like fractures and ligament problems as well as act as a de-stressing agent. We (almost) shivered our way through a quick test....









MXGP FRA

Back to business for Jeffrey Herlings, who admitted that the hard-pack and extreme hills at Villars were hardly the preferred terrain for “a Dutch guy”. ‘84’ now has a 113 point lead in the series before even the half-way mark. With two sand Grand Prix’s in August the KTM man is potentially heading for a happy summer and a third MX2 crown









MXGP FRA





Mickael Pichon was guiding 15 year old son Zach in EMX125. Yves Demaria was a keen observer



Mike Alessi has happier GP memories in 2005 and 2010. Tyla Rat-tray is still striving for that first podium since coming back to the FIM series last year





MXGP FRA

Podium time for a little Bo-bryshev. Her Dad was markedly happier to be back on the box for the first time since 2013



ENERGY

FINISH



Livia Lancelot wins the first WMX moto by the slenderest of margins from Kiara Fontanesi. The Italian would have the overall though





Five podiums in a row for Jordi Tixier who is building a solid MX2 campaign while looking out for his best possibilities on a move to MXGP for 2016. The Frenchman was ticked off by Herlings for a hard move in qualification that caused the former world champion to crash







Fifth place was a 'best' so far for Dean Ferris who is now one of the last 350 runners in MXGP

## CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

### MXGP OVERALL RESULT

#### Riders

1	Romain Febvre, FRA	Yamaha
2	Evgeny Bobryshev, RUS	Honda
3	Tony Cairoli, ITA	KTM
4	Max Nagl, GER	Husqvarna
5	Dean Ferris, AUS	Husqvarna

### MX2 OVERALL RESULT

#### Riders

1	Jeffrey Herlings, NED	KTM
2	Tim Gajser, SLO	Honda
3	Jordi Tixier, FRA	Kawasaki
4	Pauls Jonass, LAT	KTM
5	Valentin Guillod, SUI	Yamaha

### MXGP STANDINGS AFTER 7 OF 18 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Max Nagl	332
2 Tony Cairoli	313
3 Clement Desalle	291
4 Romain Febvre	282
5 Gautier Paulin	252

### MX2 STANDINGS AFTER 7 OF 18 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Jeffrey Herlings	358
2 Valentin Guillod	246
3 Pauls Jonass	245
4 Jordi Tixier	229
5 Alex Tonkov	218






## '15 MAXAIR

GLOVE \$29.95  
JERSEY \$34.95  
PANT \$109.95



A full-page photograph of a motocross rider, Justin Jones, leaning into a turn on a dirt track. He is wearing a blue, white, and red racing suit with 'MAX' branding, a yellow and black helmet, and gloves. His red and white dirt bike has the number '3' on the front and various sponsor logos including 'WORCSRACING.COM', 'KTM', 'PIRELLI', and 'SDS'. The background is a blurred landscape with trees and a cloudy sky.

MAXIMUM AIR  
WITHOUT LEAVING  
THE GROUND

Justin Jones  
2014 ISDE Gold Medalist  
2015 San FGelipe 250 Winner









## PRO CIRCUIT

Whatever the rumoured future for Pro Circuit with Kawasaki or Monster Energy there is little doubting that the powerhouse of AMA supercross and motocross is still a major name and draw on the U.S. scene. Titles might have been a little sparse of late and as a consequence of some harsh injuries for their principal stars but Pro Circuit official gear is high quality and sought after stuff. The latest issue from the Corona tuning/race team behemoth are official rider race caps for each athlete with Adam Cianciarulo, Tyler Bowers, Joey Savatgy, Arnaud Tonus and co all catered for. The snap-backs have a 100% cotton front and 100% polyester grey mesh back. They are fully embroidered and cost 23 dollars each.







## BACKPAGE

Monster Energy Girls  
By Monster Energy











-----  
**'On-track Off-road'** is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at [www.ontrackoffroad.com](http://www.ontrackoffroad.com) every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

**Adam Wheeler** Editor and FIM MXGP correspondent

**Ray Archer** Photographer

**Steve Matthes** AMA MX and SX correspondent

**Martin Heath** MotoGP Photographer [www.martinheathphoto.com](http://www.martinheathphoto.com)

**Simon Cudby** Photographer

**Matthew Roberts** Television Presenter and WSB correspondent

**Gavin Emmett** TV commentator/Presenter and MotoGP Reporter

**Núria García** Cover Design

**Gabi Álvarez** Web developer

**Hosting** FireThumb7 - [www.firethumb7.co.uk](http://www.firethumb7.co.uk)

Thanks to [www.mototribu.com](http://www.mototribu.com)

#### PHOTO CREDITS

Ray Archer, Simon Cudby, Milagro, Ducati Corse Press, Graeme Brown, Martin Heath

**Cover shot:** Jorge Lorenzo by Martin Heath

This publication took a lot of time and effort to put together so please respect it! Nothing in this publication can be reproduced in whole or part without the written permission of the editorial team. For more information please visit [www.ontrackoffroad.com](http://www.ontrackoffroad.com) and click 'Contact us'.